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ABSTRACT

Issued jointly by Oregon's Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Commissioner of Community Colleges, this policy statement is aimed at implementing the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program (TPAD), a new applied academics curricular structure. The paper begins with a summary of Oregon's school reform effort, an open letter to the leaders of Oregon high schools and community colleges, a statement of the problem of addressing the educational and curricular needs of those students who are unlikely to complete a baccalaureate, and four benchmarks concerning the education and job training of high school students into the year 2010. Next, an introduction describes the need for a TPAD, emphasizing the ways in which such a program removes barriers to educational excellence. After providing a definition of a TPAD, the paper proposes that the following steps be taken to initiate Oregon's program: (1) develop a structured and substance-rich applied academics curriculum; (2) develop and implement high standards, achievement expectations, and assessment policies; (3) develop learning and guidance strategies; (4) provide teacher/counselor preservice and inservice programs; (5) develop the curriculum through collaboration among high school and college faculty, regional professional technical education coordinators, education service districts, and employer representatives; (6) develop strategies aimed at changing student, as well as public attitudes, about professional technical training; and (7) develop community college "bridge" programs to prepare adult students to move into TPAD programs. For each of the seven proposed steps, a number of more specific activities are explored. Notes and references are also included. (JSP)

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Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program

Developing a High Performance Workforce

State Board of Education
Oregon Department of Education
and
Office of Community College Services
700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290

Norma Paulus
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dale Parnell
Commissioner of Oregon Community Colleges

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Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century
A Bold New School Reform Effort...

GOAL: ***To produce the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010***

- **Public Accountability**
  - Annual statewide education report card
  - Local schools and school district self-evaluations every two years
  - Increased parent involvement
  - Increased cooperation among and between school and college faculty
  - Emphasis upon a continuous learning experience K through graduate school

- **Public schools will offer Certificates of Initial Mastery (CIM)** (standards are now being developed)
  - Available when standards for CIM are met (approximately age 16/grade 10)
  - Students can then attend any public educational institution offering a Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM)
  - Learning Centers will be established to help individuals earn the CIM and CAM

- **Public schools and community colleges may offer the Certificate of Advanced Mastery**
  - Offers work-based learning in high schools
  - ✓ ***Offers Tech Prep/Associate Degree Cooperative Program between High Schools and Community Colleges***
  - Offers College Prep/Baccalaureate Degree program preparation
  - Wherever possible these programs are being developed with an applied academics (context) emphasis, with the standards based on the national SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) recommendations and other national standards

- **21st Century School Councils**
  (referred to as site committees)
  - Teacher majority membership
  - 1992 - September. At least one School Council in each school district with more than one school
  - 1994 - September. At least one School Council in every school district
  - 1995 - September. School Councils in every school

- **Lengthen the school year to 220 days by year 2010**
  - 1996 - 185-day school year
  - 2000 - 200-day school year
  - 2010 - 220-day school year
  - Subject to legislative review
  - Subject to Department of Education research
  - Special attention given toward providing adequate time for activities that further the educational progress of students

- **Serve all Head Start eligible children in Oregon by 1998**

- **Investigate use of mixed age grouping nongraded primary school education (K-3)**

Oregon
Tech Prep/Associate
Degree Program

Developing a High Performance Workforce

A policy paper issued by the State Board of Education
as one of a series of policy statements relating to the
Oregon School Reform effort.

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This is a State Board of Education adopted policy statement aimed at implementing the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree program and jointly issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Commissioner of Community Colleges.

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An Open Letter To The Leaders
Of Oregon High Schools
And Community Colleges

Dear Colleagues:

After considerable review and many drafts, the State Board of Education has adopted this Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program policy paper. It outlines one of the most promising curricular changes in the new Oregon education reform effort. Implementation of this program will move Oregon a long way toward reaching our goal of producing the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010.

This paper outlines a blueprint for action aimed at building a new applied academics curricular structure. The key to the program is the integration of knowing with doing and combining content with the context of application. The implementation of this program will require an unusual amount of cooperation among and between secondary school and college board members, superintendents and presidents, principals and deans, and faculty.

We anticipate that with the full implementation of this program everyone will win. Students will be the big winners by developing the competence to cope with a fast-changing modern life. Employers will certainly win by obtaining a better educated worker. Colleges will win because entering students will be better prepared. High schools will win because more students will stay in school and more students will find satisfaction in their course of study. Local communities and our great state will win because the human resources of our state will be more fully developed than ever in our history.

You are urged to utilize this policy paper as a blueprint for action to expand the dialogue and planning where it is already in progress and to initiate the discussion where it has yet to begin.

Norma Paulus
Oregon Superintendent of
Public Instruction

Dale Parnell
Commissioner of
Oregon Community Colleges

The Oregon Education Goal:

"The Legislative Assembly declares that a restructured educational system is necessary to achieve the state's goals of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a workforce equal to any in the world by the year 2010."

(Adopted HB 3565)

The Education Problem:

It is imperative that education give priority attention to the curricular needs of those students who are unlikely to complete a college baccalaureate degree program. We must improve the match between what students need to succeed in work and other life roles and how they are taught. This requires the integration of learning-to-know with learning-to-do, changing how curricula and instructional materials are developed, how content is delivered, and how student learning is assessed.

Oregon Progress Board Benchmarks:

The following benchmarks are addressed as a part of the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program:

- 93 percent of high school students will graduate from high school by the year 2000.
- 55 percent of high school students will be enrolled in Professional Technical Education programs by the year 2010.
- 70 percent of high school students will complete at least one year of postsecondary education or training by the year 2000.
- 35 percent of high school students will be enrolled in structured work experiences by the year 2000.

The Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program

Developing a High Performance Workforce

This is a State Board of Education adopted policy statement aimed at implementing the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program and jointly issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Commissioner of Community Colleges.

Introduction

Several substantial barriers stand in the way of the majority of students in obtaining an excellent education that will move Oregon schools toward the goals established in House Bill 3565. This policy statement attempts to identify some of the barriers and then describes a program aimed at removing those barriers.

First, we have allowed the traditional college prep/baccalaureate degree curricula to be the one and only definition of excellence in secondary and collegiate education when 75 percent of the typical high school student body will not likely complete a baccalaureate degree program.

Second, in too many instances, we have allowed the curriculum to become disconnected from real-life issues. Teaching and learning in formal education often take place outside the context of real-life situations, activities, and problems. Studies have shown, however, that most individuals learn best when content is presented within the context of application.

Third, scant attention has been given in education to the subject of continuity in learning. As a result, American schools and colleges have too often become a collection of disjointed courses that often fail to connect with one another and with the students they want to teach.

Fourth, little curricular attention has been given to the pressing dilemma of how to meet the curricular needs of the great range of individual differences among students.

Fifth, we have allowed too many students—even those in professional technical education programs — to graduate from secondary schools and even postsecondary programs without the knowledge, skills, and values required to secure entry-level employment, or the academic flexibility to retrain later as job market requirements change.

Fortunately, there is a national movement afoot called the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program (TPAD) that is a key strategy aimed at removing these barriers. It is an educational plan that:

- offers an excellent curricular alternative to the traditional secondary school college-prep and general education program.
- offers students a solid academic foundation based on concrete, real-life applications.
- coordinates the curricular efforts of high schools and community colleges to provide continuity in learning.
- effectively addresses some of the key differences in student needs, backgrounds, and learning styles.
- helps students develop the lifelong learning competencies and flexibility they will need in the future — while providing employers with the kind of workers they need for high performance workplaces.

What is the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program (TPAD)?

The TechPrep/Associate Degree curriculum is a national program offered as an alternative curriculum to the college prep/baccalaureate degree course of study. It prepares the student for highly skilled occupations that allow either direct entry into the workplace as a qualified technician or continuation of further education. This program is based on application learning and formally begins at the completion of the Certificate of Initial Mastery (approximately age 16 or grade 10) in a two- to five-year curriculum culminating in a state board approved certificate or associate degree. This program works alongside the time honored college prep/baccalaureate degree curricular structure and is offered as another road to educational excellence. It is a combined secondary school and community college applied academics program based on a formal articulation agreement between the institutions. This provides students with a solid and nonduplicative high school Certificate of Advanced Mastery curriculum combined with associate degree or certificate programs in community colleges.

What TPAD in Oregon Is and Is Not

Tech Prep/Associate Degree planners in Oregon have developed firm ideas about what the program is and is not.

The Tech Prep/Associate Degree is...	The Tech Prep/Associate Degree is NOT..
• an avenue to educational reform with emphasis on contextual learning that combines knowing with doing.	• traditional approaches to education but with a new name.
• the integration of professional technical education and academic curricula with an applied academics emphasis.	• professional technical education based on technical skills only.
• a cooperative and connected secondary and postsecondary program emphasizing continuity in learning.	• unconnected secondary school and community college courses.
• an avenue to successful employment with multiple exit points leading to an associate degree and possibly further advanced education.	• a high school terminal education program...or only emphasizing baccalaureate degree programs.
• a curricular "choice" based on individual learning styles.	• a "tracking" approach to education.
• preparation for a career and continuing education.	• entry-level job preparation only.
• a clear curricular structure with substance and focus.	• a smorgasbord of courses without substance and focus.
• helping students to use resources, information, and work as a team member.	• students working alone with little concentration on the use of resources and information.

Proposed Accomplishments to Implement the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program

The following proposed accomplishments have been identified to implement the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program as a major component of Oregon school reform efforts.

A. Develop a structured and substance-rich applied academics curricula that provides opportunities for all students to understand the relationship between academic subject matter and real life application.

B. Develop and implement high standards, achievement expecta-tions, assessment policies and procedures for Tech Prep/ Associate Degree programs.

C. Develop learning and guidance strategies that allow all students to acquire positive attitudes toward life skills, lifelong learning, and career opportunities.

D. Provide teacher/counselor preservice and inservice programs to help prepare school and college personnel to work in Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

E. Develop the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula through collaboration among high school, college faculty, regional professional technical education coordinators, education service districts, and employer representatives.

F. Develop strategies aimed at changing student as well as public attitudes about professional technical education.

G. Develop community college bridge programs to prepare adult students to move into Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

Proposed Activities to Implement the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program

A series of proposed activities have been identified for each proposed accomplishment. The following activities will be addressed as a part of the implementation of the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program:

A. Develop a structured and substance-rich applied academics curricula that provides opportunities for all students to understand the relationship between academic subject matter and real life application.

1. Develop and implement an Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula that prepares students to enter mid-level professional technical occupations and career options with multiple exit points. Foundation courses being developed and used in Oregon high schools and community colleges include: Applied Physics, Applied Biochemistry, Applied Communication, Applied Math, Applied Economics, and Materials Science. Articulation efforts are now underway to approve these high school courses as appropriate preparation for college entrance.

2. Adopt and/or develop Associate Degree programs that tie directly to the high school Tech Prep curricula.

3. Develop academic curricula that focus on integrating knowing (content) with doing (context).

4. Develop Pre-Certificate of Initial Mastery career exploratory programs.

5. Prepare four-year occupational category-based Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula that begin at the completion of the Certificate of Initial Mastery, provide a Certificate of Advanced Mastery at about the midpoint of the program, and continue on to the completion of an Associate Degree.

B. Develop and implement high standards, achievement expectations, assessment policies and procedures for Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

1. Develop specific Certificate of Advanced Mastery standards and include the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula and application learning.

2. Develop or adopt postsecondary associate degree and certificate requirements based on high performance standards such as professional certification and licensure.

3. Assure that community colleges communicate associate degree and certificate standards to their secondary school colleagues so that students are adequately prepared for the next step after high school.

4. Develop outcome-based assessment policies and practices that give attention to application learning and are not based solely on seat time or traditional paper and pencil tests.

C. Develop learning and guidance strategies that allow all students to acquire positive attitudes toward life skills, lifelong learning and career opportunities.

1. Identify a specific curricular sequence that begins on completion of the Certificate of Initial Mastery (age 16/grade 10) and culminates with:
   - entry level employment.
   - continued education in Associate Degree or Baccalaureate Degree programs.
   - entry into apprenticeship or other work-based learning programs.

2. Develop secondary school guidance programs that help all students assess their personal interest, aptitudes, and competencies to make appropriate curricular choices that will prepare them to take the next step after high school..., whatever that step may be.

3. Implement guidance and appropriate instructional delivery systems that meet the needs of students with disabilities and special needs.

4. Provide all students from kindergarten through adulthood with career exploration opportunities and an understanding of the need to develop the competencies required for lifelong learning.

D. Provide teacher/counselor preservice and inservice programs to help prepare school and college personnel to work in Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

1. Work with regional professional technical education coordinators, and vocational technical education deans to provide professional development activities for faculty and guidance personnel. This will help them better understand student learning styles, contextual learning, and methods for utilizing applied learning within the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricular structure.

2. Design and identify staff development programs which assist schools and colleges to implement appropriate guidance and curricular models that meet the needs of all students.

3. Assure that school and college faculty have significant involvement in the development and implementation of the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula.

4. Work with teacher education institutions to help re-direct teacher education toward integrating conceptual and contextual learning through the identification of effective ways to present learning within the context of application and the integration of academic and professional technical instruction.

5. Provide state-level resources to encourage faculty groups, professional organizations, and teacher education programs to develop and offer appropriate workshops and inservice activities.

E. Develop the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula through collaboration among high school, college faculty, regional professional technical education coordinators, education service districts, and employer representatives.

1. Develop the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula through a working partnership between academic and professional technical education teachers at the high school and college levels and a working partnership with employers and labor representatives.

2. Involve the employer community in developing the Tech Prep/Associate Degree curricula as well as in providing employment standards, contextual learning examples, teacher internships, structured work experience, and other authentic learning experiences for students.

3. Create working structures on an institutional and regional basis, including education service districts that promote ongoing collaboration between academic and professional technical educators and high school/community college educators through work with regional professional technical education coordinators and educational service districts.

4. Utilize regional Workforce Quality Councils to help identify local training needs and implement this program. This will also involve developing local education partnerships with employers, labor, community groups, and local government to gain the new sources of investment needed to upgrade the technology necessary to prepare students to meet tomorrow's requirements.

F. Develop strategies aimed at changing public attitudes about professional technical education.

1. Develop strategies to work with students, parents, counselors, school administrators and faculty to help them understand the employment opportunities and family wage jobs that are available through professional technical associate degree programs.

2. Work with the employers to help them understand that the Tech Prep/Associate Degree program can mean a quality assurance in employee training and hiring. Urge employers to call for "associate degree preferred" when advertising mid-level position openings.

3. Work with the employee and labor communities to help them understand the quality standards involved in Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

4. Work with secondary school faculty and counselors to help them see this program as a strategic opportunity to achieve educational excellence for all students...and a program worthy of their active support.

G. Develop community college "bridge" programs to prepare adult students to move into Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

1. Implement bridge programs for adults, including those with special needs, who have not had the opportunity to experience the high school portion of the Tech Prep Program and may not have the basic competencies necessary to succeed in highly technical careers.

2. Develop appropriate assessment methods and outcome-based bridge programs at the community colleges to allow adults with academic deficiencies to succeed in and complete high quality Tech Prep/Associate Degree programs.

3. Review the college curricula to assure continuity in learning and elimination of unnecessary duplication brought about by high performance tech prep programs in high schools.

Notes and References

We would like to thank the many individuals, and organizations that have provided comments and suggestions for this Tech Prep/Associate Degree policy paper. In particular, a special thank you to the following:

- 21st Century Schools Council, Oregon Department of Education
- Community College Commissioner's Task Force on Education Reform, Bill Bell and Doreen Dailey, co-chairs
- Chemeketa Community College faculty
- Confederation of Oregon School Administrators
- Linn-Benton Community College faculty
- Staff from the Offices of Professional Technical Education and Community College Services
- Oregon Association of Vocational Special Needs Personnel
- Oregon Business Education Association
- Oregon Department of Education staff
- Oregon Education Association, Robert Crumpton, Executive Secretary
- Oregon PTA
- Oregon Professional Technical Development Association
- Oregon School Boards Association
- Oregon State System of Higher Education
- Portland Area Vocational Technical Education Consortium (PAVTEC)
- Professional Technical Education Deans from Oregon Community Colleges
- Regional Professional Technical Education Coordinators
- Rogue Community College faculty
- Superintendent/Commissioners Joint Management Council
- National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of Illinois--Champaign, Debra Bragg and Glenda Huffman

The following references have been utilized in preparing this policy statement:

The Neglected Majority, Dale Parnell, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington D.C., 1985.

Tech Prep Associate Degree, Dan Hull and Dale Parnell, Center for Occupational Research and Development, Waco, Texas, 1991.

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Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance, Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U.S. Department of Labor, 1992.

The Tech Prep Resource Series: Getting Started in Tech Prep, Center for Occupational Research and Development, Waco, Texas, 1992.

For more information about the Oregon Tech Prep/Associate Degree Program, contact your local regional professional technical education coordinator, professional technical education deans at your local community college or contact: JD Hoye, Associate Superintendent, Office of Professional Technical Education, (503) 378-3584 or the Tech Prep/Associate Degree Coordinator, Office of Community College Services, (503) 378-8560, 700 Pringle Parkway SE, Salem, OR 97310-0290.

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